the translator and his shadow, part one

Zucht und Züchtung: Nietzsche's teaching of biology and nature

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FEB 04, 2022

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One day, hopefully soon, this trilogy of posts on Nietzsche will be obsolete. The man with green gloves is correct to advise against reading any secondary interpretation of Nietzsche or Schopenhauer, to drink only from the source, unfiltered . . . And in general this principle extends to all philosophy and all truth in general — mediators, secondary sources, interpreters, translators: when you subject yourself to the ambitions of lesser men and scholarly laborers, you expose your brain to poisons and diseases that cannot easily be expurgated.

So I can only justify this series of posts on Nietzsche by stating my purpose for this series, which is not to interpret the work of a prophet, but to serve only as a tonic, one that destroys and cleanses the mind of the lies promulgated about his philosophy, a series that renders itself obsolete, and translates Nietzsche back into the kernel of his teaching — into nature.

Zucht und Züchtung

> **TO TRANSLATE MAN BACK INTO NATURE**, to become master over the many vain and overly enthusiastic interpretations and connotations that have so far been scrawled and painted over that eternal basic text of *homo natura*; to see to it that the human being henceforth stands before human beings as even today, hardened in the discipline of science, he stands before the *rest* of nature, with intrepid Oedipus eyes and sealed Odysseus ears, deaf to the siren songs of old metaphysical bird catchers who have been piping at him all too long, "you are more, you are higher, you are of a different origin"—that may be a strange and insane task, but it is a *task* —who would deny that?

(This passage, from section 230 of Beyond Good and Evil*, is Walter Kaufmann's translation. Kaufmann, whose Wikipedia bio can be found here,* [1] *is generally considered the*

definitive authority on Nietzsche in the English-speaking world, especially in the United States. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale are the two best translators of Nietzsche into English, in terms of prose quality. However, Kaufmann was also an interpreter of Nietzsche, and every facet of his castration of Nietzsche — the negation of Nietzsche's political philosophy, the de-contextualizing of Nietzsche's opposition to Christianity, the fabrication of a position of neutrality with regards to master and slave moralities — has become gospel in academia and thereby in the normie rehabilitation of Nietzsche, an ironic fate for a philosopher who set out to be as blasphemous and irredeemable as possible. Much of this series, then, will be dedicated to a point-by-point refutation of Kaufmann's claims about Nietzsche, beginning with Nietzsche's conception of nature.)

What does it mean to *translate man back into nature*?

We must understand Nietzsche's criminal teaching of nature, nature as a pure and uncompromising revival of the classical instinct for rank and self-perfection. Nietzsche's reintroduction of ancient notions of heredity, biology, and willing fulfilled the promise of German philology — a new science that cut through the abstractions of words and customs and brought forth the terrible, forgotten truth of the Indo-European conquests. In the end, Europe died before it truly confronted the burden of biological self-knowledge, the final and most bitter fruit of the Enlightment. Its death was explosive, and only now do we poasters find ourselves rekindling a new light, reckoning with the explosion Nietzsche brought forth…

With all this in mind, we turn to Kaufmann's extremely influential claims in his book *Nietzsche*, particularly in Chapter 10, "The Master Race." The distortions Kaufmann makes here are unbelievably disingenuous — Let's begin with one jaw-dropping example.

Kaufmann is insistent throughout the chapter that Nietzsche holds a

> belief in the heredity of acquired characteristics and the conviction that race mixture might favor the attainment of culture — both in nations and in individuals.

To support this characterization of Nietzsche as a partisan for "race mixture," Kaufmann then says the following:

> In the *Dawn*, Nietzsche persists in his gigantic scheme for a future mixed breed and considers the advantages of an ingredient of Chinese blood. (M 206)

So this is the claim: Nietzsche was attracted to "race mixture" (to use Kaufmann's endearingly awkward phrasing) so much that he even considered breeding Europeans with Chinese! What a forward-looking thinker! Let's take an extended look at the aphorism in the *Dawn* that Kaufmann mentions:

> 206. *The impossible class.* — Poor, happy and independent! — these things can go together; poor, happy and a slave! — these things can also go together — and I can think of no better news I could give to our factory slaves: provided, that is, they do not feel it to be in general a *disgrace* to be thus used, and *used up*, as a part of a machine and as it were a stopgap to fill a hole in human inventiveness! To the devil with the belief that higher payment could lift from them the *essence* of their miserable condition — I mean their impersonal enslavement! To the devil with the idea of being persuaded that an enhancement of this impersonality within the mechanical operation of a new society could transform the disgrace of slavery into a virtue! To the devil with setting a price on oneself in exchange for which one ceases to be a person and becomes part of a machine!
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> ……
>
> Let Europe be relieved of a fourth part of its inhabitants! They and it will be all the better for it! Only in distant lands and in the undertakings of swarming trains of colonists will it really become clear how much reason and fairness, how much healthy mistrust, mother Europe has embodied in her sons — sons who could no longer endure it with the dull old woman and were in danger of becoming as querulous, irritable and pleasure-seeking as she herself was. Outside of Europe the virtues of Europe will go on their wanderings with these workers; and that which was at home beginning to degenerate into dangerous ill-humor and inclination for crime will, once abroad, acquire a wild beautiful naturalness and be called heroism. — Thus a cleaner air would at last waft over old, over-populated and self-absorbed Europe! No matter if its 'workforce' should be a little depleted! Perhaps it may then be recalled that we grew accustomed to needing many things only when these needs became so *easy* to satisfy — **we shall again relinquish some of them! Perhaps we shall also bring in numerous *Chinese*: and they will bring with them the modes of life and thought suitable to industrious**

> **ants. Indeed, they might as a whole contribute to the blood of restless and fretful Europe something of Asiatic calm and contemplativeness and — what is probably needed most — Asiatic *perseverance*.**

In summary, Nietzsche says that European life is degenerating into a condition of enslavement. Europe should export its excess workers to find fortune and heroism abroad rather than agonize over incremental gains in the quality of life. On the current course of transformation into slavelike, "pleasure-seeking" herd animals who live in an exhausted and pointless Europe — which Nietzsche calls *dem verdumpften alten Weibe*, "the dull old woman" — Europeans are becoming indistinguishable from Chinese, *whom Nietzsche explicitly calls slavish insect-people.* [2]

And what does Kaufmann make of this section? He says only that Nietzsche "considers the advantages of an ingredient of Chinese blood" to support the claim that Nietzsche promoted "race mixture." Nietzsche's caustic insult of the European worker and of the Chinese, both of whom he likens to slaves incapable of dignity, is twisted by Kaufmann into an Open Societies Foundation talking point. In order to believe Nietzsche was saying this to support race mixture, we'd need to believe that Nietzsche yearns for what he describes as "the modes of life and thought suitable to industrious ants." [3] This is about as likely as Hegel yearning for clear prose or Strauss yearning for a straightforward reading of a text.

The rest of Kaufmann's chapter is full of similarly mendacious contortions. It makes one wonder about Kaufmann's motivations. In the very next sentences of this chapter, Kaufmann says:

> [Nietzsche] also declares: "Probably there are no pure races but only races that have become pure, and these are very rare" (M 272). In developing this point, he claims that "mixed races always mean, at the same time, mixed cultures" and adds that they are at most "more often evil, cruel, and restless." **To draw the conclusion that Nietzsche therefore abominated mixed races is, of course, to miss the very gist of his philosophy.**

So, per Kaufmann, the "very gist" of Nietzsche is mixed races and cultures. Let's look at the full aphorism Kaufmann cites: [4]

> 272. *The purification of the race*. — There are probably no pure races but only races that have become pure, even these being extremely rare. **What is normal is**

> **crossed races, in which, together with a disharmony of physical features (when eye and mouth do not correspond with one another, for example), there must always go a disharmony of habits and value-concepts. (Livingstone heard someone say: "God created white and black men but the Devil created the half-breeds.") Crossed races always mean at the same time mean crossed cultures, crossed moralities: they are usually more evil, crueller, more restless.** Purity is the final result of countless adaptations, absorptions and secretions, and progress towards purity is evidenced in the fact that the energy available of a race is increasingly *restricted* to individual selected functions, while previously it was applied to too many and often contradictory things: such a restriction will always seem to be an *impoverishment* and should be assessed with consideration and caution. **In the end, however, if the process of purification is successful, all that energy formerly expended in the struggle of the dissonant qualities with one another will stand at the command of the total organism: which is why races that have become pure have always also become *stronger* and *more beautiful*. — The Greeks offer us the model of a race and culture that has become pure: and hopefully we shall one day also achieve a pure European race and culture.**

As with our first example, the passage that Kaufmann cites explicitly supports the exact opposite of what he claims. Kaufmann has turned an ode to racial purity into its antithesis. [5]

(Kaufmann might have done better to point out that Nietzsche's notion of 'purity' is slightly different than that of the Third Reich - instead he resorted to transparent inversions)

Indeed, everywhere in his voluminous writings, Nietzsche exalts the striving for purity and perfection — this is the meaning of the doctrine of self-overcoming, and it is closely linked to the love of the *pathos* of distance, the embrace of hierarchy within society and within the soul. Accepting Nietzsche's philosophy means accepting the need for slavery and cruelty, imposed on oneself and others, in the service of culture:

> **Preventing the sick making the healthy sick—for that is what such a soddenness comes to—this ought to be our supreme object in the world—but for this it is above all essential that the healthy should remain *separated* from the sick, that**

> **they should even guard themselves from the look of the sick, that they should not even associate with the sick.** Or may it, perchance, be their mission to be nurses or doctors? But they could not mistake and disown *their* mission more grossly—the higher **must** not degrade itself to be the tool of the lower, the **pathos of distance** must to all eternity keep their missions also separate. [6]

> To the Greek the work of the artist falls just as much under the undignified conception of labour as any ignoble craft. But if the compelling force of the artistic impulse operates in him, then he must produce and submit himself to that need of labour. **And as a father admires the beauty and the gift of his child but thinks of the act of procreation with shamefaced dislike, so it was with the Greek. The joyful astonishment at the beautiful has not blinded him as to its origin which appeared to him, like all "Becoming" in nature, to be a powerful necessity, a forcing of itself into existence.**
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> ...
> Now we have the general idea to which are to be subordinated the feelings which the Greek had with regard to labour and slavery. **Both were considered by them as a necessary disgrace, of which one feels ashamed, as a disgrace and as a necessity at the same time.**
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> ...
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> **Accordingly we must accept this cruel sounding truth, that slavery is of the essence of Culture; a truth of course, which leaves no doubt as to the absolute value of Existence. This truth is the vulture, that gnaws at the liver of the Promethean promoter of Culture. The misery of toiling men must still increase in order to make the production of the world of art possible to a small number of Olympian men.** [7]

> We "preserve" nothing, nor would we return to any past age; we are not at all "liberal," we do not labour for "progress," we do not need first to stop our ears to the song of the market-place and the sirens of the future—their song of "equal rights," "free society," "no longer either lords or slaves," does not allure us! We do not by any means think it desirable that the kingdom of righteousness and peace should be established on earth (because under any circumstances it would be the kingdom of the profoundest mediocrity and Chinaism); we rejoice in all men, who, like ourselves, love danger, war and adventure, who do not make compromises,

> nor let themselves be captured, conciliated and stunted; we count ourselves among the conquerors; we ponder over the need of a new order of things, **even of a new slavery—for every strengthening and elevation of the type "man" also involves a new form of slavery.** [8]

In these three passages Nietzsche makes the case for why there can be in the end no compromise between the perfection of a people and notions of equality. Flourishing of the best human types presupposes both distance from the lowly and enslavement of the lowly; to advance culture and human perfection the noble types must improve themselves biologically and spiritually without worrying about the sick and superfluous and must be free to thrive without the indignities of labor (recall the *Dawn* section 206, discussed above). The model for this *willed improvement of mankind* is ancient Greek civilization.

Kaufmann's other central claim regarding Nietzsche's teaching of heredity is that "Nietzsche repudiated 'physiologism.'" This claim too is incorrect, although it rests on a solid foundation of Nietzsche's association with Lamarckism. Kaufmann begins this argument as follows:

> In [Beyond Good and Evil] Nietzsche summarizes his belief in the heredity of acquired characteristics.
>
> > One cannot erase out of the soul of a man what his ancestors have done most eagerly and often . . . It is not at all possible that a man should *not* have in his body the qualities and preferences of his parents and ancestors — whatever appearances may say against this. This is the problem of race. [J 264] [9]

This does indeed express Nietzsche's Lamarckism — but which way does this heredity cut? If you find Darwinian biological determinism depressing, then actions and acquired characteristics are supposed to alter genetic lineage, which is perhaps "heartening" to contemplate; on the other hand, one cannot escape the actions of his parents, which is "depressing" if it makes you feel powerless. Kaufmann chooses to emphasize the "optimistic" side of Nietzsche's Lamarckism.

Early in his chapter Kaufmann writes,

> In *Human, All-too-Human*, Nietzsche states flatly that the son "uses the father's head start and inherits his habits" (MA I 51). In a more famous aphorism of the same work, Nietzsche decried "nationalism" as "dangerous," advocated intermarriage between different nations, and expressed his hope for a "mixed race, that of the European man."

As already mentioned above in the discussion of the *Dawn*, section 272, the European mixed race for which Nietzsche pines is first of all explicitly "pure," eugenic, and exclusively European, and secondly, it is to be a master-caste destined to rule over the herd-animal bred by Christianity and democracy. (Nietzsche's political philosophy will be discussed at length in part two of this series) Let's examine the first aphorism cited by Kaufmann: *Human, All-too-Human*, part one, section 51.

> *How appearance becomes being* — Even when in the deepest distress, the actor ultimately cannot cease to think of the impression he and the whole scenic effect is making, even for example at the burial of his own child; he will weep over his own distress and the ways in which it expresses itself, as his own audience. The hypocrite who always plays one and the same role finally ceases to be a hypocrite; for example priests, who as young men are usually conscious or unconscious hypocrites, finally become natural and then really are priests without any affectation; or if the father fails to get that far then the son does so; employing his father's start and inheriting his habits. **If someone obstinately and for a long time wants to *appear* something it is in the end hard for him to *be* anything else. The profession of almost every man, even that of the artist, begins with hypocrisy, with an imitation from without, with a copying of what is most effective. He who is always wearing a mask of a friendly countenance must finally acquire a power over benevolent moods without which the impression of friendliness cannot be obtained — and finally these acquire power over him, he *is* benevolent.**

Kaufmann is correct that this is not Darwinism, that it is a form of proto-epigenetics that is neither strictly mechanistic nor tolerant of any notions of a "blank slate." (See also the aphorism "Anti-Darwin" from *Twilight of the Idols,* or the opening sections of *Bronze Age Mindset*). This does *not* imply, however, that Nietzsche happily forgets about the consequences of heredity and breeding: on the contrary, they are the inner core of Nietzsche's metaphysics. It is only from this dynamic understanding of biology, which he takes directly from the Greeks and in particular from Heraclitus,

that Nietzsche derives his politics and thereby his prescriptions for constructing a new high culture worthy of the ancients.

Which does Nietzsche prioritize, “spirit” or “blood”? Kaufmann says Nietzsche holds them in equal regard. But ——

> *Beauty no accident.* — Even the beauty of a race or family, its grace and goodness in all gestures, has to be worked at: like genius, it is the end result of the accumulated work of generations.
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> …
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> In Athens at the time of Cicero, who expressed his surprise at the fact, men and youths were vastly superior to women in beauty: but what work and effort the male sex had demanded of itself there in the service of beauty! — We really should not misunderstand their method for this: a mere training of feelings and thoughts is practically nothing (—herein lies the great mistake of German education, which is completely illusory): **first, the *body* must be talked round. A strict maintenance of significant, chosen gestures, a pact to live only among humans who do not “let themselves go,” is quite sufficient to attract notice and selection: in two, three generations, everything has been *internalized*. It is decisive for the destiny of peoples and humanity that culture should begin at the *correct* point — *not* in the “soul” (as was the fateful superstition of priests and half-priests): the correct point is the body, gesture, diet, physiology, the *rest* follows from these . . . For that reason, the Greeks remain the *foremost cultural event* in history — they knew, they *did* what was necessary;** Christianity, which has despised the body, has up till now been the greatest misfortune of humanity. — [10]

In this passage (leaving aside the final sentence for now) we see the full force of Nietzsche’s doctrine of nature and of the overcoming of nature, and we see how ridiculous Kaufmann is to claim that this man, who said all philosophy begins in the intestines, ever abandoned physiology. Epigenetic inheritance, without selective breeding, is insufficient; Darwinian “natural selection,” without the active manipulation of acquired characteristics, is also insufficient: this is the meaning of that phrase of Nietzsche’s that Kaufmann so despised, *Zucht und Züchtung* — discipline and breeding. [11] And Nietzsche is unequivocal that the body should be the starting point that educates the soul.

Nietzsche did not arrive at this teaching through idle speculation, or through the "tight-assed attitude of the science cultist"; he discovered this lost understanding of *phusis* through his study of Schopenhauer, of the Greeks, and ultimately of Heraclitus.

> Louder than Anaximander, Heraclitus proclaimed: "I see nothing other than becoming. Be not deceived. It is the fault of your myopia, not of the nature of things, if you believe you see land somewhere in the ocean of coming-to-be and passing away. You use names for things as though they rigidly, persistently endured; yet even the stream into which you step a second time is not the one you stepped into before."
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> …
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> The everlasting and exclusive coming-to-be, the impermanence of everything actual, which constantly acts and comes-to-be but never is, as Heraclitus teaches it, is a terrible, paralyzing thought. Its impact on men can most nearly be likened to the sensation during an earthquake when one loses one's familiar confidence in a firmly grounded earth. It takes astonishing strength to transform this reaction into its opposite, into sublimity and the feeling of blessed astonishment.
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> …
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> Everything that happens, happens in accordance with this strife, and it is just in the strife that eternal justice is revealed.

This is from Nietzsche's early and incomplete text, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. Nietzsche's embrace of Heraclitus' physics is a seminal moment in the history of philosophy and of the demise of the West. In the above excerpt we see nature as dynamic and eternal, we see the great challenge of self-overcoming, and we even bear witness to the beginnings of Nietzsche's conquest of nihilism, his striving to build meaning out of perpetual flux and chaos.

Nietzsche never finished this book on the presocratic philosophers: he had few students and little time, and he was forced to embark on the solitary life of a prophet. It is instead us frogs, a century and a half after the writing of this book, who will take up the task Nietzsche left for us. Having lain dormant under arbitrary censorship and distortion, Nietzsche's philosophy, the purest and most radical distillation of the Hellenic spirit in the modern world, is embarking on the Great Down-Going.

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1 Reading Kaufmann's biography, one can speculate as to ulterior motives he may have had, but this should not immediately discredit his framing. As Nietzsche says, objectivity is a veil for the philosopher's will to power.

2 Nietzsche's contempt for the Chinese is consistent throughout his writing; the idea that he thought Europe needed what he saw as *more* passive subjects imported from China is absurd. A few examples:

"China is an instance of a country in which dissatisfaction on a grand scale and the capacity for transformation have died out for many centuries; and the Socialists and state-

idolaters of Europe could easily bring things to Chinese conditions and to a Chinese "happiness," with their measures for the amelioration and security of life, provided that they could first of all root out the sicklier, tenderer, more feminine dissatisfaction and Romanticism which are still very abundant among us." (*The Gay Science*, 24, tr. Thomas Common)

"For the position is this: in the dwarfing and levelling of the European man lurks *our* greatest peril, for it is this outlook which fatigues—we see to-day nothing which wishes to be greater, we surmise that the process is always still backwards, still backwards towards something more attenuated, more inoffensive, more cunning, more comfortable, more mediocre, more indifferent, more Chinese, more Christian—man, there is no doubt about it, grows always "better" —the destiny of Europe lies even in this—that in losing the fear of man, we have also lost the hope in man, yea, the will to be man. The sight of man now fatigues.—What is present-day Nihilism if it is not *that*?—We are tired of *man*." (*The Genealogy of Morals*, First Essay, Section 12, tr. Horace Samuel)

3 An historical nuance which Kaufmann fails to properly explain is that the concept of "race" (generally *rasse* in Nietzsche's writing) in 19th century Germany is not the same as in late 20th-century USA. Nietzsche sees the different classes of 19th-century Europe as different races, corresponding roughly to the remnants of the feudal order and ultimately to the Aryan / Indo-European conquests. Also, in German public discourse in Nietzsche's lifetime, the Jews were often spoken of as a distinct race. But Kaufmann is disingenuous about this type of race mixture, because he strongly implies that Nietzsche would support non-European immigration, that he abhorred "racism" (a concept which, unlike "anti-Semitism," was not part of Nietzsche's vocabulary) and so forth.

Here are some relevant passages that show what Nietzsche means by "race":

Beyond Good and Evil, section 208, tr. Helen Zimmern from Project Gutenberg:

"In the new generation, which has inherited as it were different standards and valuations in its blood, everything is disquiet, derangement, doubt, and tentativeness; the best powers operate restrictively, the very virtues prevent each other growing and becoming strong, equilibrium, ballast, and perpendicular stability are lacking in body and soul. That, however, which is most diseased and degenerated in such nondescripts is the *will*; they are no longer familiar with independence of decision, or the courageous feeling of pleasure in willing—they are doubtful of the "freedom of the will" even in their dreams Our present-day Europe, the scene of a senseless, precipitate attempt at a radical blending of classes, and *consequently* of races, is therefore skeptical in all its heights and depths, sometimes exhibiting the mobile skepticism which springs impatiently and wantonly from branch to branch, sometimes with gloomy aspect, like a cloud over-charged with interrogative signs

—and often sick unto death of its will! Paralysis of will, where do we not find this cripple sitting nowadays! And yet how bedecked oftentimes' How seductively ornamented!"

See also *The Genealogy of Morals*, essay one, section five in its entirety. Especially:

"The same is true substantially of the whole of Europe: in point of fact, the subject race has finally again obtained the upper hand, in complexion and the shortness of the skull, and perhaps in the intellectual and social qualities. Who can guarantee that modern democracy, still more modern anarchy, and indeed that tendency to the "Commune," the most primitive form of society, which is now common to all the Socialists in Europe, does not in its real essence signify a monstrous reversion—and that the conquering and master race—the Aryan race, is not also becoming inferior physiologically?" [tr. Horace Samuel]

(The concept of racialism versus “spiritual metaphor” in Nietzsche’s writing will be discussed at greater length in essay three in this series, on master and slave moralities)

4 All excerpts from *The Dawn* (*Morgenröthe)* are from R.J. Hollingdale’s translation, from Cambridge UP.

5 It is true that in *Beyond Good and Evil* and elsewhere, Nietzsche says that the national cultures of modern Europe (French, German, &c.) are mixed cultures. What is not true is what Kaufmann implies, which is that Nietzsche *preferred* mixed cultures and races (especially in the context of post-WWII immigration). Nietzsche, above all else, preferred only the *improvement* of culture and race — he suggested integrating Jews into a pan-European ruling class for their intelligence, for example. This is what Nietzsche means by “purity.”

Another subject that will be addressed at greater length in the second essay of this series is what Nietzsche means by the fact that Europe is racially and culturally mixed. This mixture corresponds, in Nietzsche’s view, to Aryan and pre-Aryan descent (see *Genealogy* essay one section five, *Beyond Good and Evil* 244). Kaufmann claims that Nietzsche is neutral with regards to masters and slaves and also to Master and Slave Moralities. I will show that this is false.

6 *The Genealogy of Morals*, Third Essay, Section 14. See also *Twilight of the Idols*, “A Morality for Doctors.”

7 "The Greek State,” an early essay.

8 *The Gay Science*, 377, tr. Common. Note also the insult aimed at China.

As an aside, this section of the *Gay Science* contains one of the alleged repudiations of nationalism that Kaufmann cites. Note, however, that wherever Nietzsche attacks nationalism, for instance in this section, it is in order to express his preference for pan-European unification:

"On the other hand, however, we are not nearly "German" enough (in the sense in which the word "German" is current at present) to advocate nationalism and race-hatred, or take delight in the national heart-itch and blood-poisoning, on account of which the nations of Europe are at present bounded off and secluded from one another as if by quarantines. We are too unprejudiced for that, too perverse, too fastidious; also too well-informed, and too much "travelled." We prefer much rather to live on mountains, apart and "out of season," in past or coming centuries, in order merely to spare ourselves the silent rage to which we know we should be condemned as witnesses of a system of politics which makes the German nation barren by making it vain, and which is a *petty* system besides:—**will it not be necessary for this system to plant itself between two mortal hatreds, lest its own creation should immediately collapse? Will it not *be obliged* to desire the perpetuation of the petty-state system of Europe?...**"

The question of nationalism and Nietzsche's political philosophy in general, which arises out of the concept of nature discussed here, will be covered in the next essay in the series.

9 I.e. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 264.

10 *Twilight of the Idols*, "Forays of an Untimely One," Section 48, tr. Del Caro et al, Stanford UP.

11 Throughout his translations Kaufmann generally translates *züchtung* and its variants as "cultivation" instead of as "breeding." This undue emphasis on metaphor over literal reading is one good reason to avoid Kaufmann's translations — another is that anytime Nietzsche says anything about women or blond people or cruelty in the *Genealogy* or *Beyond Good and Evil*, Kaufmann adds a lengthy footnote "contextualizing" Nietzsche's writing. This practice is infuriating and highly distracting, especially on a first read, as it detracts from the power of Nietzsche's prose. Also, as with Kaufmann's biography, much of what he says in his footnotes to the translations is misleading or wrong. Unlike other translators, Kaufmann took it upon himself to editorialize upon Nietzsche's writing. He was accused by one translator (Martin Clancy) of "dampening metaphors" that were controversial in *Zarathustra*; on the subject of Wagner, another prominent translator wrote that Kaufmann was "someone who not only had no interest in Wagner, the man or his work, but who wished that Nietzsche never had had either."

Instead, I would recommend R.J. Hollingdale's translations, where available. Older translations such as those by Thomas Common or Ludovici are inferior in prose quality

and sometimes contain errors — Kaufmann himself makes a convincing case for avoiding them. More recent translations, such as those from Stanford University Press, are generally accurate and well-done, but one should be wary of political meddling: I have come across monstrosities such as the term “the Overhuman” in *Zarathustra*.

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BowTiedShrimp Bow Tied Shrimp Feb 5, 2022 ❤ Liked by Araltes

Thank you for this, I read Kaufmann's translations first and have always been troubled by the contradictions.

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1 reply

maisyrusselswart Feb 4, 2022 ❤ Liked by Araltes

So it seems from this that Nietzsche's version of purity is closer to something like the completion of Plato's caste system in the Republic rather than a universal racial purity of blood, i.e. a greater emphasis on trait selection in individuals than things like eye/hair color in population at large, even if the latter follows the former in the long run.

If the above is roughly correct, it seems that N's point about bringing in Chinese would be more to increase the load bearing capacity of the European producer class.

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